

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRANSPORTATION, TREASURY, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, THE JUDICIARY, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN E. SWEENEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 13, 2006

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5576) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, Treasury, and Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, District of Columbia, and independent agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes:

Mr. SWEENEY. Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your leadership on this bill. I am proud to serve as the Vice-Chairman of this Subcommittee. I want to echo the words of my friend, Mr. REBERG, because Amtrak is an essential service in my Congressional District and home state of New York.

We have had this debate every year, and we go through this process in each of those years. Last year in particular, we fought possibly the toughest battle in years for passenger rail. We were threatened with vetoes, unless some Amtrak reforms were enacted. So what did we do? We enacted reform. One year later, we have seen evidence these reforms are working.

Yet, here we are today with a proposal to fund Amtrak at \$900 million. This allocation is a shutdown number for Amtrak, and it would come at the worst possible time to shut down Amtrak.

This is because we have seen evidence these reforms are working. We required Amtrak put in place a new business plan. We required Amtrak to institute new service contracts and plans. For instance, they had to adopt more efficient accounting procedures. We also demanded they restructure their dining services, which was a big money loser.

The Department of Transportation Inspector General just issued a report on Amtrak business practices. According to this April 6th report, Amtrak has saved \$19 million from October 2005 through February 2006, thanks to these reforms. This is better than expected.

Amtrak is saving money because of the institution of these new reform plans that we demanded of them. To now shut them down would go back on our word. They lived up to their end of the deal, now we must live up to ours.

Finally, in these times of record high gasoline prices, allow me to mention that Amtrak promotes fuel conservation. At this time, when we are all sensitive about that, it is something that we ought to seriously consider.

A recent study by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory shows Amtrak consumes 17 percent less energy per passenger than auto-

mobiles and 18 percent less than planes. A vote to fund Amtrak is a vote to promote energy independence.

I am not naive enough to think that this will solve all of our energy problems. Our energy policy should be a multi-faceted approach involving increasing our supply of traditional energy, investing in forms of alternative energy and promoting conservation. Increasing our domestic supply and investing in alternative fuels takes time—years in many cases.

Here is an amendment that is part of this larger solution. Furthermore, this is an amendment that will make an immediate difference. This will not save gasoline 1 year, 5 years, 10 years from now. This will save gasoline tomorrow.

I urge support of the LaTourette Amendment.

CONGRATULATING JONES METAL PRODUCTS

HON. GIL GUTKNECHT

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2006

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jones Metal Products of Mankato, Minnesota, on receiving the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve's Above and Beyond award.

The National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, ESGR, was established in 1972 to promote cooperation and understanding between Reserve component members and their civilian employers. Their mission is to continuously gain and maintain active support from all public and private employers for the men and women of the National Guard and Reserve. Local and national representatives stand ready to help employers understand federal laws that affect the call-up of their employees. The Above and Beyond award recognizes those who have gone beyond what federal law requires for supporting activated Guard employees.

Minnesota businesses that employ Guard members are an essential link in family support for deployed service members. The state of Minnesota is recognized as a leader among those employing Guard and Reserve members and received the 2004 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award.

Jones Metal Products, one of 475 companies nominated for the Above and Beyond award, was nominated by Staff Sgt. Juan Berrones. While Staff Sgt. Berrones was deployed to Iraq, Jones Metal Products provided him pay raises, two bonuses and showed continuous support to his family.

I extend my sincere congratulations to Jones Metal Products for receiving the Above and Beyond Award from the National Committee for Employer Support of Guard and Reserve and commend them for the extraordinary services provided to those who serve our country.

ECOZONE

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2006

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, in a time of increasing public demand for clean air, clean water, energy independence and improved environmental quality, I wish to commend the founder of EcoMedia—Mr. Paul Polizzotto for his visionary public-private partnership called "EcoZone," which will debut this week here in our Nation's capital. EcoZone leverages the resources of private corporations to improve local community environments at no cost to the taxpayer. Whether this is through funding projects which promote clean air, clean water, energy efficiency or greenspace, EcoZone allows corporations to demonstrate their commitment to local communities and is an example of the growing recognition by corporations that environmental sustainability and good corporate citizenship are profitable enterprises. I encourage the EPA, the Department of Energy, NOAA and other relevant government entities to pursue partnerships via the EcoZone program all across this country.

ECOZONESM DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OVERVIEW

1. EcoZone is the flagship program of EcoMedia, the world's premier environmental media company, which brings together government and industry to fund technologies and solutions to serious environmental problems—at no additional cost to taxpayers.

2. EcoMedia's flagship program, EcoZone, is the first public-private media partnership model in the nation to use corporate sponsorships to generate revenue for local governments to fund critical environmental and clean energy projects in their communities.

3. EcoZone consists of initiatives in four signature areas: air; energy; water; and parks and green space.

4. District of Columbia is the first city in the nation to launch EcoZone; other cities and states expected to launch EcoZone programs in 2006 include St. Petersburg, Miami, Long Beach and additional Southern California communities and the State of New Jersey and many more.

5. The historic agreement between the District of Columbia and EcoMedia implements the nation's first EcoZone program and will help the city comply with federal and state environmental regulations mandating clean water and air in Washington, as well as identify best management practices to promote greater energy efficiency, preservation of greenspace and a cleaner local environment.

6. Previously, EcoMedia launched its EPA award-winning pilot program Adopt-A-Waterway[®], to help fund and clean up local waterways. Successful Adopt-A-Waterway cleanup programs are currently underway in Miami, FL; Long Beach, CA; Sacramento County, CA, among other communities.

7. Under the EcoZone program, the city will receive critical funds secured through sponsorships of educational signage that promote environmental messages. The signage will include EcoZone's public education messages, encouraging citizens to be stewards of

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